

REMEDIES OVER THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO THE RURAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Language is the instrument which can be helpful to exchange information with one another. In olden days, people used gestures and symbols to transmit information. The symbols were written and spoken form in the following days. Thus, the language evolved with the help of each period. Many languages are created by human in different places of the world for communication. Today, nearly 6,500 languages are spoken by people all around the world. Among this, English language is considered to be the very important language by the majority of people. English language has a great impact on all fields because of that mass dominant language in the world. Especially it is an undeniable fact that English has a huge impact on education. In many countries, English is taught as a second language. Learning second language is a highly challenging for rural students in comparison to urban students. English language proficiency is negligible in rural students. There are many factors that make rural students lagging in the English language. This paper throws light on the obstacles caused to the rural students in learning English as a second language and the effective remedies to enhance their English language proficiency.

Keywords: Rural students, ESL, LSRW, Obstacles, Remedies.

Introduction

English is the widely spoken language by over 1,121 million speakers in worldwide. There are 378 million native speakers (those who speak English as first language) and 743 million non-native speakers (those who speak English as second language). English language is spoken in 118 countries across the world. It is recognized as an official language of 59 countries. English is the dominant internet language, compared to 54% of web content is in English language. It is also the language of scientific and technical periodicals. More

than 50% of the world technical and scientific periodicals are in English. Besides English is the common language in which people living in different countries communicate to one another during their travel, business or in other contexts. Thus, English language is unique as the popular language known by the majority of people all over the world. So learning English as a second language is the essential one for today's period.

Second Language

A second language is any language that a person uses other than a first or native language. Contemporary linguists and educators commonly use the term L1 to refer to a first or native language, and the term L2 to refer to a second language or a foreign language that is being studied.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a Second Language is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. That environment may be a country in which English is the mother tongue (e.g., Australia, the U.S.) or one in which English has an established role (e.g., India, Nigeria).

ESL Learning

There are various advantages of learning English as a second language. Learning English is easy to communicate with anyone in the world. A person can increase self-confidence and courage by acquiring knowledge in English. Besides the personality increases by learning English. Learning English takes a high value in society as the dominant influence of English language overcomes the world. Furthermore, the people can brighten in any field if they learn English well.

Significance of the Study

English is spoken fluently by several of the people living in different places of the world, although learning English as a second language is difficult for many. Particularly the rural students are highly stumbled in learning English as a second language. Many of the rural students do not understand the importance of English language. So they are not interested in developing their English language skills. Such students are learning English only for the purpose of examination. With the result, after they complete schooling and go to college, they can not understand, speak, read and write English without any confusions or errors. Even if they have various talents but being weak in English, it is difficult to express

their talents. This causes them to feel inferiority and fear. So they leave quietly without revealing their ability. Due to this, there is stagnation in the development of students' education. In this context, this study will be useful to English faculty working in rural areas to understand the leading cause of problems in learning the ESL to the students and solve those problems with improve their standard.

Obstacles Cause to the Rural Students in Learning ESL and their Remedies

The following are the obstacles

Illiterate Parents

Many of the rural student's parents have not completed their school education and many others do not know how to read and write. There is a little awareness about English, the second language. Thus, it is impossible for the children to discuss English with her parents at home. Hence, the rural children mostly speak at their homes only in mother tongue. Moreover, the rural students are not able to get rid of the doubts in English lessons to ask their parents. Illiterate parents are not able to pay attention to the level of their child's educational developments, the ability of their child's to do homework and that the school subject portions are being studied by their children on a daily basis. Such parents do not go to school and discuss with teachers about their child's educational status. Rural areas are also less encouraging as proper motivation from the illiterate parents for the improvement of the students.

Teachers can focus as much on student's welfare. Teachers can create awareness for students and their parents on the importance of education and the second language. The teachers can immediately communicate with their parents about the student's activities, discipline and educational level in the classroom. Teachers can guide parents to improve student's education.

Insufficient Income

Many of the students in rural schools belong to backward family in the economy, wage earners. Their income is adequate to meet daily housing needs. Such parents do not have the opportunity to improve their child's English language skills. For example, buying English newspaper everyday, sending their children to special training classes which are taught to speak fluently in English and taking drills for English language improvement via the websites. Besides there are some students' family situation that cannot even meet the

essential education needs of their children. Thus, the economic atmosphere of the family is a great barrier to improve the student's English Language skills.

Teachers can know the economic situation of students and take appropriate measures. For instance, English newspapers are now provided to promote English language proficiency of students in all schools. There are only a few students who are best able to use this opportunity. If a teacher thinks everything is possible. All students can be trained and supervised by teacher for developing their English language skills through proper use of this opportunity. Like this, the teacher can take students to the school library and improve the vocabulary of the students. Instead of spending money on special classes for English language learning, the teachers can generate small conversational programs in the classroom itself and improve the language skills of the students. They can also create the opportunity to improve students' language skills along the way of the websites. Teachers can consider the family circumstances of the students and afford to have some essential materials for educational purpose. Due to this backward students in economic condition will have a favourable situation for developing their language skills at school.

Residential Areas

Educational facilities in rural residential areas are limited. For example public library, tuition centres and etc. In addition to these, the number of educated people is also limited. This makes students to ask for their doubts in English subject from their neighbours and the situation is low. Students who are growing in that environment are always speaking only in the mother tongue and are denied the opportunity to speak English at other times except at the time of school. Moreover, the technology and internet are the essential for students to perform their projects, assignments and other educational activities. These are something impossible for rural students. Because here a few who know to collect educational resources with the help of technology and the website.

Special coaching classes are essential for students who are backward in the English subject. Special coaching classes in rural areas are rare one especially coaching classes for the English subject is limited. Thus the rural students are affected. To prevent this, teachers can conduct special classes in the school and train deprived students in English. The students' doubts in the English subject can be cleared in the classroom by the teacher. Teachers can encourage students to speak English as much as possible not only in schools but also in other places. The teacher can establish guidelines for collecting materials through internet to facilitate projects, assignments and other educational activities. For example, the teacher

teaches students the methods of handling the computer and websites and to facilitate the use of technology facilities that are available in the school for the educational needs of the students.

Student's Fear and Inferiority

Generally, inferiority complex is more in rural students. They compare themselves with urban students. Hence, there are some wrong opinions about them in their minds as the urban students are better than themselves and they are more intelligent and industrious. Besides, there are also misunderstanding that urban students have the only ability to speak English. They underestimate their capacity that they cannot excel in English like urban students. This type of inferiority complex in the rural students is a barrier to their development. Besides, the fear of the students also gives them a barrier to English language. Many of the students are reluctant to speak in English, fearing that the teacher will be punished by the mistake of speaking in English and others will ridicule the way of speaks. Such inferiority and fear is barrier to the development of English language skills by the rural students.

The teacher can also try to develop such inferiority and fear which is naturally seen in the students. The teacher can explain well that English is only a language and not the knowledge. The teacher can be creating well aware to the students that they do not need to develop fear and inferiority about the error of speaking a language. The teacher can give confidence to the students that they can learn the second language in the same way how they learn the mother tongue. Urban students are developed in English spoken environments so it is easy for them to talk in English. Similarly, teachers' advice can be given to the rural students to create the English spoken environment for speaking English. For example, they can try conversing in the English language apart from mother tongue while interacting with friends and teachers. When students try to speak English, the teacher can encourage them and not be evasive or punish them for any reason. The teacher can praise the student to presence of other students. Only then will other students be encouraged without making fun of them. The teacher can kindly explain and correct the mistakes of the students. Through this, students will come to speak, read and write without any hesitation or fear.

Influence of Mother Tongue

Influence of mother tongue is one of the factors that hinders learning second language. Mainly rural students are suffering greatly because of this. Usual,y every one

speaks in the mother tongue, thinking about the words also in their mother tongue. They use same language whenever they gathering words in thought and then they speak sentences. So they can speak easily and fluently. In contrast, when they try to speak the second language they change this method. They use mother tongue for gathering words in their thought then they try to translate the words from first language into second language for speak. So they are struggling to speak in second language. Influence of mother tongue also due the cause of spelling error and pronunciation error. For example 'iskool', 'istudent', 'plezar' and other such words.

The main reason for influence the mother tongue is the lack of vocabulary. Students can avoid these kinds of problems by improving their vocabulary. Teachers are advised to give students the instructions to improve their vocabulary. For example, teachers can create the habit of reading on students. The habit of reading will help the students to improve their vocabulary. Even if the students improve the vocabulary, their English speaking ability will increase. Next the errors in pronunciation, in the rural areas there is a lot of pronunciation errors committed by the students. If the teachers try, they can easily correct this. Teachers can teach tongue twister to students so that students can practice enthusiastically. Read text aloud by the students and the teacher note down the words that they pronounce incorrectly to practice later. The teacher can advise and encourage the students to improve their pronunciation by listen regularly to an English news channel, English movies and English songs to find out how native English speaker speak English. The teacher can create a situation in which students are able to self analyze what kind of words they wrongly pronounced. For example, when the students speak in English, the teacher can record it and then play them.

Low Attention of Students in the Classroom

Rural students pay less attention to second language learning. Even if the teacher has a lesson, the students are distracted. All other subjects are easily understood by their mother tongue but English is a second language so students cannot pay enough attention to the English subject. This makes it difficult to understand English. Such attention scattering is hindrance to the development of English language skills by the student.

The first and perhaps most important management strategy is the teacher knows to ensure that all students understand how concentration works and identify the strengths and weakness of their particular attention profiles. The teacher can allow the students for movement and breaks. Providing opportunities to move around and a little break is helpful

for students who have problems with inconsistent alertness and mental effort. Attention will increase when the interest increases. So the teacher can be encouraged to read, write and speak to students in a way that induces interest. That means teaching the hard part of English subject in the form of sports. The grammar rules can be taught by music to keep students in mind. The teacher can change teaching methods according to the wishes of the students and the circumstances. In order to reinforce students' attention, teacher can be taught with gesture. Also, during the English class, the teacher gives small tasks to the students as well as gives them awards when they complete them perfectly. Such activities easily lead to the interest and attentiveness of the student.

Role of the Teacher

The English teachers working in rural schools keep teaching the subject in their mother tongue rather than teaching them in English. In English class time, even teachers talk to the students in their mother tongue. The teachers also fail to advise the students to speak only English in language period. Because of the untrained teachers, English as a language is prevented naturally in school. Apart from these factors, many teachers teach English only from the Exam perspective. Their aim is to make high score for students. They fail to care enough about the knowledge and language skills of the students. The role of teacher's less contribution is mainly due to the students lingering in the English language.

Teachers are the next to parents in determining a child's growth. So the teachers must work from their duty without fail. The teachers should keep updating themselves according to the time. Before entering the classroom, the teacher has to prepare the area they are going to teach. The environment in which rural students speak English is rarely formed. So the teacher can create this environment for students in the classroom. Especially in the English classroom the teacher set up the situation for the students that they speak only in English. Teachers can be taught to improve the language competence of the students without the basis of exam perspective. Some teachers who opt for students will be trained in any one skill. This makes students weak in other three skills. Therefore, teacher training can be given to the students to excel in all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. To improve the language skills of students, teacher can arrange some programs and encourage the students in English classroom such as essay writing, elocution, quiz, spell bee, book reading, debate and etc. Furthermore, teachers can be kind and caring towards students. Only then will the student respect the teachers and they will voluntarily come up to ask the teacher to clear their doubts

without fear. Also their desire to learn English will naturally generate them. Thus, each teacher can be guided to the improvement of the students.

Lack of Innovative Teachers

There are more experienced teachers in rural schools but there are very few teachers who think innovative. Teachers in rural schools have been following the same teaching pattern over a period of time. They are not trying to inject innovation in teaching according to generation change. The teacher will give the lecture and the students memorize it and write the exam. These are the things that do here. This makes students tired and disgusted with learning.

“In education, student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education” (edglossary.org). All the old teaching methods are not acceptable to new generations. Because of students thinking, capacity, mindset and etc are different according to generations. So, in order to benefit the generation, teachers import many innovations in teaching. Only then will the students come forward to learn with interest. The research results say that the project based learning will be a powerful and students pleasing learning. Project based learning uses situations, obstacles and problems in the real world to involve students in critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and self management. So teachers can teach through the project based learning. Cross over teaching is another one best way of innovative teaching. Although this form of teaching does not cover technology, it is an enriching experience for both the student and the teacher.

The learning takes place here in an informal setting, such as industrial visit, Museum, and exhibition trips etc. The faculty can relate the content of their subject with the experiences that the students have. Adding questions related to the subject further enhances and deepens this teaching. Then, the students can add field trip notes, photographic and other group assignments related to the trip to the classroom discussions. This kind of teaching method is that students can easily understand and deepen the minds of the students. Using technology in the classroom helps engage the students with different kinds of stimuli and creates an activity based learning environment. It makes the classroom subject content more meaningful and it makes learning enjoyable. Innovative teachers are instinctive about challenges facing the student, such as lack of understanding, loss of focus, low commitment

or de motivation. They seek new ways of keeping students on the job, motivating them to do their best and encouraging them to succeed.

Teaching Methods

The teachers do not greatly focus on the teaching methods in rural schools. If they complete the portion, they think their duty is over. In some schools, the teacher handles two classes for students studying in Tamil medium and English medium together. English medium students easily understand but the Tamil medium students are unable to compensate for the teacher's velocity. English is the second language for such students; the understanding of the subject knowledge is in question mark. Thus, the students with low learning skills and the students with high learning skills, the teacher use the same teaching methods for both of them.

The classroom is a dynamic environment bringing together students with various abilities and personalities from different backgrounds. Therefore, becoming an effective teacher involves creative and imaginative instructional methods to meet the unique needs of the students. Further in learning process, the contribution of both teachers and students should be equal. At the same time the purpose of the teaching is to reach all the students in the class only then will the learning be completed. Cooperative learning method encourages students with mixed skills to work together by promoting activities for small groups or for the whole class. Through verbally communicating their ideas and listening to others, the students can build their self confidence and improve their essential life-long communication and critical thinking skills. Acting short drama sketches is a one example of how to integrate cooperative learning into the English classroom lesson. The teacher's teaching method can bring the students to the utopian world in accordance with the lesson. For example, if the teacher teaches a lesson of "The Lotus Eaters", the teacher's teaching skill can be better able to the students can see the lesson's events with their mental eyes. The teacher can use various types of teaching aids to make their teaching better. These will give fantastic images to students' imagination.

Lack of Academic Facilities

Academic facilities are very undefeated in rural schools. Some schools do not even have such facilities classrooms, seats and libraries. Library, English language lab, ICT lab and audio visual room are an important role in developing the English language literacy of students. Such educational facilities are not available for rural students. Though the

educational facilities are set up in some schools, they are not in use for the improvement of students.

The qualities of the academic facilities in two ways affect the students. Firstly, a lack of resources restricts a student's ability to pursue different learning opportunities and extra curricula. Second, a lack of facilities has a negative impact on the satisfaction of a teacher's job which undermines their motivation to teach. Libraries, English language lab, computer lab, audio visual room and auditorium are essential facilities for English language learning. The school academic facilities enhance the standard of the school's study environment, thus enhancing educational efficiency. Therefore, the school administration can set up the facilities needed for the English language development of students in each school. Villages are the backbones of the country. Therefore, the development of rural students is like ensuring the backbone of a country. In developing educational facilities in rural schools, the government must maintain its obligation.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi said, "If village is destroyed, India too will be destroyed". Hence, the development of rural people is a very important one. Mainly the quality of education of the rural students should be raised. In many classrooms, the teachers are the active speakers and learners are passive listener and this scenario needs to be changed. Students should be encouraged to take part in communicative based activities. The teacher can enhance their English language proficiency by gradually improving listening, speaking, reading and writing skills which four are considered the more important skills in English language. The teacher needs to upgrade themselves. The syllabus in English need to challenge and updated, and cater to the academic and professional needs and requirements of the student community. The school administration should provide educational facilities and necessary materials for developing the students' English language skills.

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